

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 are pending in the application. Claim 3 has been cancelled, and claims 1 and 2 have been amended, leaving claims 1-2 and 4-5 for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment. Applicant requests reconsideration in view of the Amendment and Remarks submitted herewith.

First, Applicant would like to point out that this application was originally drafted in the Japanese language and filed in Japan on June 25, 2001. The application was then translated and filed in the United States on July 31, 2001. This application claims priority to that Japanese application. In Japan, the term "plate-like section" was intended to mean a rounded dish, as plates in Japan are rounded. This is evidenced by Figures 3 and 5B, which illustrate the plate-like section 15a as a rounded or concave section. Accordingly, the term "plate-like" means concave section. Applicant has amended the term "plate-like" to be "concave" to clarify that the intended meaning of the shape of the section is a concave shape.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wijenberg et al. (US 6,259,205) ("Wijenberg"). Claims 2-5 stand rejected under U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wijenberg in view of Minamikata et al. (US 5,331,249) ("Minamikata").

Claims 1-2 and 4-5 include the following limitation: "wherein a concave section for loading an additive material is formed on said discharge electrode." Wijenberg and Minamikata do not teach or suggest this limitation.

The advantages of the recited limitation are described at page 13, line 8 to page 14, line 12 of the specification. Such advantages include that the concave section can hold additive materials in either liquid or powder form and can also function as a sizing device in that the section can constantly supply a constant amount of material. There is also a greater contact surface between the discharge electrode 15 and the discharge gas filling discharge chamber 18, and consequently, the luminance and discharge efficiency during the discharge effect can be improved.

The Examiner asserts that Minamikata teaches a plate-like section 11 formed on the discharge electrode. However, as explained in Minamikata, the plate-like section 11 is a flat plate as can be seen in Figure 2A. Accordingly, none of the references teach or suggest a concave section formed on the discharge electrode. Applicant respectfully requests that the rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the event the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks deems additional fees to be due in connection with this application, Applicant's attorney hereby authorizes that such fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 06-1130.

Respectfully submitted,

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